The Effectiveness of Flourish Training on Occupational Wellbeing among Trainers of Exceptional Children with Special Needs in Yazd

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

The present study intended to determine the effectiveness of flourish training on occupational wellbeing. The statistical population of this study were trainers of exceptional children with special needs.

METHODS

Thirty people were randomly selected among this population and then appointed to two experiment and control groups. Pretest-posttest with control group design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Study instruments included occupational wellbeing, occupational burnout, occupational motivation, and occupational fascination questionnaires (for both groups). Flourish training was performed on the experiment group in 10 sessions, and the post-test was carried out for both groups after the end of the sessions. Then, multivariate analysis tests and SPSS v17 were used to analyse data.

RESULTS

The results showed that flourish training made a significant difference in all research variables between experiment (133.6 ± 33.65) and control (121.8 ± 80.52) groups. It means that the mean of the experiment group has significantly increased compared to the control group, indicating flourish training effectiveness on occupational wellbeing.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study may be used to improve positivism among individuals.

KEY WORDS

Flourish Training, Occupational Wellbeing, Exceptional Children, Special Needs

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BACKGROUND

Psychology has mainly focused on pathology and functional impairment in humans since the 1940s and the beginning of WWII and continuously has considered negative aspects and emotions, such as anxiety and depression.¹ Humans flourish through applying capacity and talent.² Flourishing describes a high level of mental health by social, mental, and emotional wellbeing.³ State that this new branch of psychology mainly studies power, happiness, and mental wellbeing scientifically.⁴ They mention that what is considered in positive psychology and psychological wellbeing is how human life flourishes and his/her potentials turn into action.⁵ Further, they believe that, according to this new approach, any individual with features such as self-esteem, wide social communication, self-efficacy, and independence enjoys mental health or psychological wellbeing. Therefore, various theories and key views have been recently proposed about positive psychology, one of which is flourishing.⁶

Studies about wellbeing have been increased during the past two decades, providing various definitions.⁷ Wellbeing is defined as individuals' mental evaluation of their lives and includes concepts such as life satisfaction, pleasant emotion, fulfilment, and meaningfulness.⁸ It is among the optimal parameters of life since a life without pleasure, emotion, and the sense of satisfaction and meaning and with dissatisfaction and anger may not be ideal.⁸ According to Parker and Hyett, occupational wellbeing is a multidimensional structure including four dimensions of work satisfaction, organizational respect for the employee, employer care, and intrusion of work into private life.⁹

The occupational satisfaction dimension means how much individuals' occupation makes satisfaction, valuableness, and meaningfulness and how it may develop and promote their abilities.¹⁰ Respect for staff means that how much upper hand individuals of an organization are trustworthy and respect moral values and also how much staff believe and follow the organization's values. Among medical staff, there is a positive relationship between occupational wellbeing and life quality, occupational satisfaction, and occupational performance; also, there is a negative relationship between occupational wellbeing and work-family conflict.¹¹

METHODS

This research was a pretest-posttest with the control group design. Population included all trainers of exceptional children with special needs in Yazd and sample included 30 trainers of exceptional children with special needs who were selected randomly. Initially, all participants were asked to answer an occupational wellbeing questionnaire. Then, the intervention was applied to the experiment group; finally, the tastes of both groups answered research questionnaires. To conduct the study ethically, all the steps and objectives were described to the participants. Then, a written informed consent form was given to them. Moreover, all necessary explanation concerning the right to withdraw the study for any reason was provided to the participants.

Follow-up	Posttest	Intervention	Posttest	Groups	Random selection
T3	T2	X	T1	Experiment	R
T3	T2	-	T1	Control	R
Pretest-Posttest with Control Group Design					
R=sample random assignment, X=training intervention, T1=pretests, T2=posttest, T3=follow-up					

According to the above table, participants were assigned to experiment and control groups randomly. Both groups were pre-tested, post-tested, and followed-up. The experiment group received an intervention; however, the control group did not receive any intervention, and it was only pre-tested, post-tested, and followed-up. It is worth mentioning that one month after experimental intervention, dependent variables were measured as a follow-up. The statistical population included trainers of children with special needs in Yazd.

Inclusion Criteria

- Work experience of more than 5 years,
- At least a BA degree,
- Not participating in other consultation and psychotherapeutic sessions simultaneously,
- Not using psychiatric drugs.

After examining inclusion criteria for trainers, 30 of them were randomly selected. Then, the experiment group was trained flourishing, and 10 personal flourish training sessions were performed for the control group after performing post-test during follow-up. The flourish training plan consisted of 10 120-minute sessions, with the class consisted of one trainer and one assistant trainer.

Occupational Well-being Questionnaire

This questionnaire designed by Parker et al. has 31 questions, which include four dimensions of work satisfaction (10 items), organizational respect for the employee (7 items), employer care (7 items), and intrusion of work into the private life (7 items).⁹ Answers are ranged on a five-degree Likert scale from never-1 to very much-5. Question number 26 of this questionnaire is scored reversely. The total score of scale is obtained from the sum of subscales scores, and it is ranged from 31 to 155, with a low score indicating a low level of health and wellbeing of employees in the work environment. Parker uses the retest method to calculate the reliability of this instrument, which is 91% for work satisfaction, 95% for organizational respect for the employee, 87% for employer care, 71% for the intrusion of work into the private life, and 91% for the total scale.⁹ This questionnaire has been translated into Persian by Kaabomeir et al and its reliability has been reported 79% for work satisfaction, 82% for organizational respect for the employee, 93% for employer care, and 62% for the intrusion of work into the private life.¹²

Flourish Training

The flourish training plan was performed on the experiment group. This program was performed under the titles of tolerance, strength points of personality, and flourishing as a two-day workshop for Singaporean teachers.¹³ The content of medical sessions was in five main intervention fields,

including positive emotions, relationships, involvement, meaning, and progress, being performed in 10, 2-hour sessions as a follow-up. Also, the sessions were performed as lectures, group discussions, ask-answer, and class activities.

Sessions	The Content of the Flourish Intervention Training Session
Session 1	Introducing and familiarizing with the participants and making a relationship; Familiarizing participants with subjects, educational purposes, and positive psychology based on improved resilience, the ABC model (according to the study by Ellis (1975), indicating that when an activating event (A) happens, beliefs (B) affect consequences (C) or outcomes in two ways); Conclusion
Session 2	Reviewing the contents of the previous session with the help of participants; Introducing flourish, positive psychology, thought patterns; Speaking about thought traps and interventions in views, positive emotions, love-kindness meditations, and appending positive pieces; Selecting a positive feeling and making a general plan for reviewing the contents of the previous session with the help of participants.
Session 3	Introducing abilities; classifying abilities; focusing on the advantages of abilities and PERMA elements (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement), emphasizing positive emotions; activities in class; experiencing positive and negative emotions; expressing feelings and thoughts
Session 4	Representing a summary of previous session contents; Introducing engagement, conditions effective on engagement in work, engagement methods, and group work; (checking out previous session homework, lecturing about involvement and release in a pleasurable activity, group exercise, ask-answer about involvement in a special activity, and checking involvement barriers); Conclusion
Session 5	Representing a summary of previous session contents; Lecturing about relationships, relationship-wellbeing, trust-building activity, trust, and relationship-making strategies; Conclusion
Session 6	Representing a summary of previous session contents; Introducing meaning and meaning story; Lecturing about purpose and meaning in life (a selective of Victor Frankl's book, Man's Search for Meaning-we have to be responsible to have meaning and be purposeful in life, as well as believing that we can help the world around us); Conclusion
Session 7	Representing a summary of previous session contents; Introducing the concept of achievement and progression and successful people's characteristics, ask-answer; Conclusion
Session 8	Representing a summary of previous session contents; Introducing resilience and strategies to improve it; (Resilience does not only mean recovering from a bad event, but it means precision about misfortune or flexibility for compatibility); Conclusion
Session 9	A short review on the contents represented during the training course; asking participants' opinions about the contents; re-performing DASS scale on both experiment and control groups
Session 10	Closing the group; discussing what has learned; summarizing the achievements of each participant; emphasizing the positive skills each person has learned

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive indices included mean and standard, and multivariate analysis tests were used. Moreover, IBM SPSS Statistic (version 17) (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY) was applied for analysis the data.

RESULTS

Calculating statistical indexes including Mean Difference (MD=3) and Standard Deviation (SD=3) in the pilot study and with regarding statistical power of 80% ($P < 0.05$), 30 patients were needed for two group ($n=30$). Thirty people, with an age range of 27 to 39 years, participated in this study (15 in the control group and 15 in the experiment group). All participants received flourish training. Then, the frequency and percentage of groups' members were represented.

According to the Table 1, the mean and SD of study variables were represented considering the groups and test stages. After investigating descriptive findings, inferential results were studied.

Variables	Group	Pre-test (SD $\pm$ mean)	Post-test (SD $\pm$ mean)	P
Work satisfaction	Experiment	38.3 $\pm$ 93.94	42.2 $\pm$ 80.78	0.005
	Control	37.2 $\pm$ 73.89	39.3 $\pm$ 47.83	
	Total	38.3 $\pm$ 33.45	41.3 $\pm$ 13.70	
Organizational respect for the employee	Experiment	27.4 $\pm$ 27.40	29.2 $\pm$ 73.15	0.003
	Control	27.3 $\pm$ 00.00	27.2 $\pm$ 13.10	
	Total	27.3 $\pm$ 13.70	28.2 $\pm$ 43.47	
Organizational employer care	Experiment	24.4 $\pm$ 40.12	30.1 $\pm$ 20.32	0.003
	Control	26.3 $\pm$ 13.20	27.2 $\pm$ 73.81	
	Total	25.3 $\pm$ 27.73	28.2 $\pm$ 97.50	
Work into the private life	Experiment	27.3 $\pm$ 40.20	30.2 $\pm$ 60.97	0.002
	Control	28.2 $\pm$ 07.22	27.3 $\pm$ 47.74	
	Total	27.2 $\pm$ 73.73	29.3 $\pm$ 03.68	
Total occupational wellbeing	Experiment	118.12 $\pm$ 00.21	133.6 $\pm$ 33.65	0.004
	Control	118.7 $\pm$ 93.19	121.8 $\pm$ 80.52	
	Total	118.9 $\pm$ 47.86	127.9 $\pm$ 57.53	

Table 1. Descriptive Indices of Research Variables

As the occupational wellbeing variable consisted of 4 parameters, MANCOVA was used to investigate the above hypothesis. Flourish was considered as an independent variable, participants' scores in post-test as a dependent variable, and their scores in pre-test as a covariate. The covariance test has some assumptions. Thus, it is necessary to investigate variables' normality, regression slope homogeneity, linear relationship, and variances equality of pre-test and post-test scores in the considered variable. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to investigate data normality. Table 2 shows the results.

As presented in the Table 1, the statistic value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in pre-test and post-test scores of occupational wellbeing parameters is observed, and almost all research variables in both groups, as well as pre-test and post-test, were normal. Therefore, the data normality hypothesis was approved. Among the other conditions, the test condition is a linear relationship between pre-test and post-test scores of research variables.

Resources	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	p-value
Group	0.331	1	0.331	0.003	0.940
Pre-test	142.644	1	142.644	2.504	0.126
Group*pre-test	7.778	1	7.778	0.137	0.715
Error	1481.339	26	56.975	-	-

Table 2. Regression Slope Homogeneity for Occupational Wellbeing Variable

Referring to the Table 2, the statistic value (0.137) obtained from the test with a p-value (0.715) is more than 0.05. Therefore, the interaction resulted from the data is not significant. That is, regression slope homogeneity is approved, confirming this hypothesis. After investigating the general hypothesis of covariance analysis, MANCOVA is analysed. MANCOVA has some hypotheses to be investigated. Box's M test is used to examine the equality of variance-covariance matrix, being confirmed by the results (Box's M-18.446, F-1.556, P-0.113). Moreover, Levene's test is used to investigate error variances of the test. Table 4 provides the results.

Variables	F-statistic	Intergroup DF	Intragroup DF	Significance
Work satisfaction	3.002	1	28	0.094
Organizational respect for the employee	0.140	1	28	0.711
Organizational employer care	4.825	1	28	0.036
Work into the private life	1.698	1	28	0.203

Table 3. Levene's Test Results to Investigate Error Variances in Occupational Wellbeing Parameters

According to the Table 3, the assumption of error variances equality and variance-covariance hypothesis is confirmed in occupational wellbeing parameters; therefore, MANCOVA analysis tests show a significant difference in the scores between both groups (Wilk's Lambda-0.711, F-3.732, P-0.019) (Table 5).

Traces	Value	F	DF Hypothesis	DF Error	Significance	Effect Size	Power
Pillai's trace	0.415	3.732	4	21	0.019	0.415	0.800
Wilk's Lambda trace	0.585	3.732	4	21	0.019	0.415	0.800
Hotelling's trace	0.711	3.732	4	21	0.019	0.415	0.800
Roy's largest root	0.711	3.732	4	21	0.019	0.415	0.800

Table 4. The Results of MANCOVA Analysis Test for Occupational Wellbeing Variable

The results show a significant difference in occupational wellbeing parameters between the two-flourish training and control groups. The results of MANCOVA analysis are represented in the following to show this difference.

Statistical Index	Sum of Sources	DF	Squares Mean	F	Significance	Eta Squared	Power
Work satisfaction	70.180	1	70.180	5.548	0.027	0.188	0.618
Organizational respect for the employee	43.878	1	43.878	10.423	0.004	0.303	0.872
Organizational employer care	29.637	1	29.637	6.079	0.021	0.202	0.658
Work into the private life	67.785	1	67.785	5.258	0.031	0.180	0.595
Table 5. The Results of The MANCOVA Analysis Test to Compare Occupational Wellbeing Parameters in Groups							

As observed in the above table, there is a significant difference in all four occupational wellbeing parameters between the experiment and control groups. According to Table 4 and descriptive findings, participants' scores increase in occupational wellbeing post-test. Therefore, flourish training increases the occupational wellbeing of participants, confirming the related hypothesis.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of flourish training on occupational well-being. The results showed that flourish training made a significant difference in all research variables between experiment and control groups. It means that the mean of the experiment group has significantly increased compared to the control group, indicating flourish training effectiveness on occupational wellbeing. Our results are consistent with some studies.^{6,7,8,9}

Based on previous studies, all aspects of occupational wellbeing are directly related to well-being. Theoretically, work satisfaction is completely related to self-esteem and

other positive emotions. Moreover, positive emotions can enhance self-satisfaction.⁶ Other evidence also showed flourish training included important content which affect positive status in human. Therefore, the content of the plan of the present study determines the major part of explaining the effectiveness and explaining the results obtained. In general, all educational programs that are associated with increasing job efficiency seek to influence the variables that increase positive emotions and psychological well-being.⁷

Evidence suggests that flourish training can increase personal resiliency because the content of this program includes items to increase employee self-esteem.⁹ Moreover, resiliency is a construct that has been studied a lot in the field of job studies and it has been determined that this structure is the basis of personal capabilities and increasing efficiency. So, in explaining the findings of this study, we should take a brief look at the issue of resiliency and self-efficacy. Although in previous studies there is not much mention of intermediate variables, but it seems that we should emphasize the role of resilience and self-efficacy in studies in this area. In sum, people's cognitive abilities and sense of self-efficacy are positive emotions that have been evaluated in positive psychology. With these descriptions, it can be explained that cognitive variables can provide job satisfaction by relying on positive psychology. In positive psychology, a lot of attention has been paid to the positive points of human beings and reinforcing them and this attention and this attention has expanded a lot in the field of occupational flourishing. It is worth to highlight that the more positive emotions develop in a person, the more job well-being appears. So, sense of worth and self-esteem can provide a personal ability to effective and efficient function. Also, in our study, the results confirm previous research evidence and related studies in this field.⁷ Organizational employer care and Work into the private life have been evaluated as the most important factors in job situations. These two factors also play an important role in psychological well-being.⁶ Psychological well-being also has a strong relationship with job well-being and it seems that in the present study, the content of the training program includes tips to increase the job and psychological well-being of employees.

Despite the useful results of this study and the experimental design used, it should be noted that there are limitations such as lack of follow-up period. Besides, the sample included trainers of exceptional children with special Needs in Yazd which may limit the generalizability of the results. Finally, experimental methods have always sought to maximize statistical control, but intervening factors may have influenced the final results. Therefore, it is suggested that in future studies of follow-up periods, strong experimental designs and broader examples of other occupations be used.

CONCLUSIONS

MANCOVA analysis results show that the absence of negative experiences, such as anxiety and mental pressure, in all occupational wellbeing parameters causes a significant difference between the experiment and control groups. The results are consistent with those of the previous.

Data sharing statement provided by the authors is available with the full text of this article at jemds.com.

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